



State of Utah

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Special Needs Preparedness What People With Disabilities Should Keep in Mind

Floods are always a threat in Utah, whether flash flooding from heavy rains or slow-rising floods from spring runoff. Everyone should be prepared for these emergency situations, but persons with disabilities have additional needs to consider. Everyone should start emergency preparedness by following these four basic steps: get informed, make a plan, assemble a kit, and then maintain your plan & kit.

Persons with disabilities should keep the following considerations in mind:

**Register with the State of Utah Special Needs Registry:** Register online at [www.specialneedsutah.org](http://www.specialneedsutah.org) or dial 211 from any phone and sign up. This free service assists emergency response personnel to locate persons with special/medically sensitive needs quickly during times of crisis, such as floods and other disasters.

**Consider getting a medical alert system:** These systems allow you to call for help if you are immobilized or stranded during an emergency.

**Have a manual wheelchair for backup:** If you use an electric wheelchair or scooter, be sure to have a manual wheelchair for easier evacuation and better mobility in temporary shelters.

**Inform personal attendants and loved ones about your medical equipment:** Let those who might be helping you in an emergency know how to work medical and other necessary equipment.

**Arrange for more than one person to check on you:** Floods and other disasters quickly cut off people from one another. Make sure someone nearby is able and willing to assist you in the event of such an emergency.

**Plan ahead for someone to assist you with communications:** If you are vision-impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, arrange for someone to relay critical information to you, such as evacuation procedures and the location of suitable shelter sites.

**Learn about home care help services during an emergency:** If possible, arrange for personal care attendants to accompany you during evacuations and remain with you in appropriate temporary shelters or alternative housing.

**Have a cell phone with an extra battery:** If you are stranded by flooding or rising waters, be prepared to contact someone for help. Maintain a list of alternate emergency contact numbers in case the 911 system is overloaded.

**Most important of all,** have backup plans for any specialized vehicle or equipment that may not be available during a crisis.

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